

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Government did not think that an enquiry was necessary.

Mr. B. M. VENUGOPALA SETTY.—Has not the State lost the services of a highly qualified officer in the death of Mr. P. V. K. Murthy?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—All those concerned with him sustained a loss.

Mr. B. M. VENUGOPALA SETTY.—Is it not desirable to appoint a committee even now to enquire into the tragedy and thereby satisfy the public?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. B. M. VENUGOPALA SETTY.—Some letters were published in the *Prajamatha* soon after the death of the gentleman. Do the Government feel that those letters are genuine?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—That is not a supplementary question.

Mr. Isthuri SAMPANGI RAMIAH SETTY.—What are the reasons mentioned in the two letters for his committing suicide?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—That would come in more appropriately in connection with the next question.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Both the questions relate to the same subject. Can they not be taken together?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—I have no objection to both questions being taken together.

Q.—171. Mr. Isthuri SAMPANGI RAMIAH SETTY (Goribidnur—Rural).—Will the Government be pleased to state:—

(a) whether they are aware that two letters written by Mr. P. V. K. Murthy at the time of his suicide were published in the *Prajamata* on page 4 of its weekly issue dated 3rd August 1941;

(b) whether they have made investigations into the charges levelled against the Head of the Electrical Department in those letters;

(c) if no action has been taken in the matter so far, the reasons for the same?

A.—The SECRETARY to GOVERNMENT, ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT (Mr. M. G. MEHKRI).—

(a) Yes.

(b) No, as it was found to be unnecessary.

(c) Does not arise in view of answer to (b).

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Two letters written by the deceased were published in the papers. Have they come to the notice of the Government?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What action did the Government take on them?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No action was considered necessary.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Were any enquiries made?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Are the Government aware that there were differences of opinion between Mr. Murthy and the Departmental Head; that he expected bad treatment at his hands and was that the reason why he committed suicide?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—From the contents of the letters, it may seem to be so.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—In spite of it, Government considered that no enquiry was called for?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What was the reason for coming to such a conclusion?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—That was the opinion of Government. The reasons cannot be given.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—The letters showed that there were serious differences of opinion between the deceased and the department and that was the reason for his committing suicide. Under such circumstances should not the Government have enquired whether it was so or not? A mere statement that there was no need for an enquiry cannot satisfy members. Satisfactory reasons must be adduced for the position taken up by the Government.

The MINISTER for LAW (Rajaseva-prasakta A. V. Ramanathan).—Government perused the letters in question and

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found that the facts contained therein were not borne out by official records. The letters gave expression to what Mr. Murthy personally felt in the matter. So, Government did not think it necessary to hold any enquiry.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Did the officers concerned meet and discuss the question before arriving at that conclusion?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—There was no necessity for a meeting or discussion.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Then, on what grounds did they come to that decision?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—They followed the usual official procedure.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What is that procedure?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is a matter of detail.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—This is a very serious matter which has resulted in a tragedy and which affects the reputation of the administration of the State. I would therefore request the Government to give full replies, to the extent possible, and not raise technical objections.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—If it is relevant and its disclosure is in the public interest, all available information will be furnished.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Government say that a public enquiry is unnecessary.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The member cannot discuss that statement; he may only ask supplementary questions.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—I am not discussing it. I would like to know what procedure the Government adopted and what enquiries they made before coming to the present conclusion mentioned.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—There is no rule which requires that in every case of death by suicide a committee of enquiry should be appointed.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—If a particular case is of more than ordinary importance or interest, are not special enquiries called for?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The Police make necessary enquiries, hold the inquest and draw up their reports.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Could the Government rest satisfied with some sort of a report sent by the Police in such extraordinary cases?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—Government cannot accept the statement that the Police make some sort of report. Officers in charge of certain responsible duties must be deemed to be discharging those duties in the prescribed manner. Their reports have to be submitted to the Magistrates for confirmation. Such being the case, the member cannot say that some extra-ordinary thing occurred, that the country as a whole has suffered, and yet that Government have failed to do their duty. That is an insinuation which Government cannot accept. The procedure prescribed for such cases has been fully gone through and there is no reason for anyone to doubt that in this particular case, it was not done.

Mr. KHAJI SYED YUSUF SAHIB.—If the inquest had disclosed that there was foul play, would the Government not have made further enquiries to get at the truth?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—Yes, certainly.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—The Police have made a report to the Government in respect of this matter. Will the Government be pleased to publish this report?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—The usual procedure has been adopted in this case also. Government do not see any necessity to make a departure from the usual practice.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Because there is suspicion about the matter in the public mind, will the Government publish the inquest report with a view to satisfy the public?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—To the extent that a copy can be given under the Criminal Procedure Code and the rules of procedure, it will be published.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—The public feeling is that some of the incidents referred to in the letters did actually take place and they were responsible for the officer committing suicide. What action have the Government taken to allay that feeling?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—To a general question like that, it is difficult to give an answer. But I should like to inform the House that the next day after the suicide, some members of the community to which the deceased belonged interviewed me and all the information that was before Government was furnished to them. Also, two hon. members of this House interviewed me subsequently, and to them, also, full information was given. As explained to all of them it was not considered necessary to order an enquiry. Even now, if any members wish to know any further information on any specific points, I am prepared to furnish it to them to the extent possible.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Were the people who interviewed the Minister satisfied with the replies they got at his hands?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—I cannot say. One of them is present in this House and the member may ask him about it.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Before Mr. Murthy committed suicide, what appointment did he hold?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—All these points do not arise. The member may ask questions, if any, meant to elicit information and not enter into a discussion.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—I have a number of points on which to elicit information.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The appointment he held is not relevant to the question. If a student committed suicide, for example, is there any relevancy in asking what class he was studying in, what examinations he had passed, and so on?

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Is it such a light matter? It is a first rate tragedy in the history of our State. That is why we are entitled to pursue the question.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The member is entitled to ask for any relevant information.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Some latitude is necessary in this case. May I know what appointment the gentleman was holding at the time of committing suicide?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—The member knows what it was.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Was not the position he was holding empowered him so as to make independent enquiries about the working of the department and submit reports direct to the Government?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—The member knows that too!

Rao Bahadur N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—With the permission of the President, I wish to say one word. This is a very important matter and one which cannot be shelved. This is not a matter which can be evaded. We will not be satisfied with a reply that this is merely a matter of opinion, that the Government came to a particular decision for their own reasons, and so forth; because people feel that the suicide was due to departmental reasons. Besides, this is not a matter in which we can seek a private interview with the Minister and seek information, for this is not a private affair. The deceased held a responsible post . . .

Mr. PRESIDENT.—Under what rule is the member making his present statement?

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—I am submitting to the President that answers should be furnished to all the questions that members wish to put in respect of this important matter.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—Answers to questions relevant to the main question will be given and any exhortation from members in this matter is really unnecessary.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Is it not a fact that the deceased was an officer empowered to make independent enquiries and submit independent reports to Government about the working of the department?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—As Electrical Inspector, he was expected to report on accidents direct to Government.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—When was he appointed to that post?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I think he was appointed in August 1940.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Did he bring to the notice of the Government that he did not like to

work as Electric Inspector as he would have to make accusations against the Head of his own department and did he beg of Government to save him from that awkwardness?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I am not aware of it.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Did the higher officers tell him that there was much he could do and that he should do it without fear or favour?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Not so far as I am aware.

M. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—How many reports did he submit in all?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—All accidents he has reported.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—In those reports has he made any indictments against the Head of the Department?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Nothing against the Chief Electrical Engineer. But he has made some accusations against some other officers of the department in respect of certain technical matters such as that the wiring was not laid properly, etc.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What action was taken on such reports?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—They were sent to the Chief Electrical Engineer for an expression of his opinion.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Was Mr. Murthy working under the orders of the Chief Electrical Engineer or independently of him?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—As Electrical Inspector he was independent, but in regard to laboratory matters he was subordinate to the Chief Electrical Engineer.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Was he not appointed to scrutinise even those matters on which the Head of the Department was expected to submit his reports to Government?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—He was not appointed to find fault with the doings of the Head of the Department. His duty was to find out the causes of accidents and suggest how to avert similar accidents in future. It was considered desirable to create an independent appointment for the purpose because a subordinate official might not boldly give out the facts.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Is it a fact that the Chief Electrical Engineer was very much dissatisfied with the reports submitted by this officer?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I do not think so.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Were these reports being referred to the Chief Electrical Engineer with instructions to get a different finding recorded with regard to the technical matters involved?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. He was asked whether the defects pointed out really existed and if so whether they could not be set right.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The member is going too much into details. Questions, such as, how far the accusations were correct and how they were dealt with and so on, cannot come in as supplementary questions.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—That may be the cause of the suicide.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—But I would request the member to restrict himself to one aspect of the question.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Even if half an hour more is allotted to this question, the House would not object to it.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—But why not come to grips with the point?

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—In his reports, the officer made some accusations against the Head of the Department.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—If questions were based on hearsay, it would be difficult for Government to answer them.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—If it is not so, the Government may say so. We are anxious that Government should do all they can to allay public apprehensions. Otherwise, they may appoint a committee of enquiry. That is our suggestion. Now, the reports were referred to the Chief Electrical Engineer. Were any replies received from him?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—In respect of some, he reported that the defects pointed out had been rectified and as regards some others, he said that the suggestions made by the officer were not workable.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—In respect of matters which were referred to some other authorities and on which the decisions of Government were revised, did Mr. Murthy lodge any protests?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Does the member mean to suggest that whatever reports and recommendations were made by Mr. Murthy should have been regarded by Government as the last word on the subject?

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Not at all. I merely want to know whether Mr. Murthy protested.

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What action did the Government take thereon?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Government told him that his attitude was not correct.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What was the pay he was getting?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Rs. 450.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—In what grade?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—In Rs. 450 to Rs. 750 grade.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Before his death, was any change made in the grade?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Was any proposal made by the Chief Electrical Engineer to transfer him to some other post carrying less pay or lower grade?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Was there any room for Mr. Murthy to fear that he would be posted to another appointment on a lower grade?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Not that Government are aware of.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—To whom else were recommendations to that effect made?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—There might have been some confidential correspondence.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Did Mr. Murthy apprehend that any kind of a degradation was likely?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I do not know.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Was there any reason for him to fear such a contingency?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I cannot say.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Did the Government give him any assurance or hope in that respect?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—If he had approached Government, perhaps they would have given.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Am I to take it then that he did not approach the Government about it?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—But was there any reason for him to fear that he would be degraded?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—He might have entertained such a fear. But Government were not responsible for it.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—However, Government had not passed any orders in this respect?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. *

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Is it a fact that the Chief Electrical Engineer was saying that Mr. Murthy would once again come under his clutches and that would be the time for him to punish Mr. Murthy for all the accusations made against him in the latter's reports to the Government?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I am not aware of any such thing.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Did Mr. Murthy bring this to the notice of the higher authorities and appeal to them for protection?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Government are not at all aware of any such thing.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—At least after the letters published in the *Prajamatha* came to their notice, did the Government enquire into the matter?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—They did not think it necessary to do so.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Have they at least heard anything to that effect?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No, not till now.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Have the Government made any enquiries of the Chief Electrical Engineer?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I am saying that Government never heard of it.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Then, may I take it that till now the Government are not aware of the fact

of the Chief Electrical Engineer threatening Mr. Murthy with punishment and the latter appealing to higher officers for protection?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes, not till now.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—At least now, do the Government consider that this must have been the reason for the suicide and therefore set up an enquiry?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What else could be the reason for it? When people have so much suspicion and doubt, based upon such direct data, why not hold an enquiry and publish a report?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is not a supplementary question.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—What is the objection, I ask, to conducting an enquiry and making a report?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—Where is the necessity, I ask, for such an enquiry? However important a public question may be, in regard to supplementary questions the ordinary rules of procedure must be strictly followed. I should invite the member's attention to the kind of questions which should not be asked, according to Rule 11 of the Legislative Rules, particularly subsections (d), (c), (g), etc. However important the question may be—and I quite recognise that from the member's point of view this may be considered an important question on the basis of some information he has received but of which Government are not in possession—the question itself must conform to the letter as well as the spirit of the rules.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—I am not making any statements. I am only asking whether it is true that certain statements have appeared in the Press.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That they have appeared in the papers is true. But how can we say whether all that is written in the papers is wholly true?

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—So far as the Government know, are they true?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That question has been answered.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Apart from the letters published, have the Government come to know anything else?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—Yes, the inquest report also was before them.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—A precious life has been lost and so many reasons have been attributed for it. Should not the Government have thought of conducting an enquiry to sift the truth?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The member has been allowed a lot of latitude so far and it would be well if he conformed to the rules at least hereafter.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—I do not grant that I have deviated from the rules relating to supplementary questions.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—I am not concerned with what the member thinks of that matter. I am only asking him to observe the rules. The member is entitled to ask for any information he wants and if we can, we shall certainly furnish it to him. But discussion, observation and surmises should not be indulged in.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—I am not doing that.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—I am afraid the member has been doing nothing but that so far.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—After the publication of the two letters and the receipt of the inquest report, did the Government enquire how far the allegations contained in the letters were true?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—As already stated, it was not considered necessary to make any enquiry.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—On what basis did Government come to that conclusion?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—The basis was that an enquiry was not necessary simply because an allegation against certain officers was made in the papers.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Are the Government thinking of holding an enquiry at least now?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—The subject is coming up again and I shall take that opportunity of discussing it further.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—I wish the member had thought of it earlier.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—Have the Government got at the originals of the two published letters?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. They have only copies.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—Are they only newspaper cuttings or authenticated copies on which Government could rely?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Even as published in the newspaper, they are authenticated copies.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—If the originals have come to your notice, could you not know that there were serious differences of opinion between Mr. Murthy and Sir Harold N. Colam on the one hand, and Mr. Forbes on the other, which culminated in the suicide?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—Afterwards did the Government ask either Sir Harold N. Colam or Mr. Forbes, either orally or in writing, whether this was so?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—I note that the Government did not ask. Was it because the Government considered that the statements in the letter were untrue or because such an enquiry was considered unnecessary?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Government thought that it was unnecessary to enquire.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—So, whether the allegations themselves were true or untrue, the Government did not know?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—That an enquiry was unnecessary we knew.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—The deceased had a number of academical degrees. Were they foreign degrees?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—For how many years was he in foreign countries to secure those degrees?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Notice.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—Was he given any scholarship by Government—foreign or loan scholarship—or did he go at his own expense?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Notice.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—In pursuance of orders of Government relating to

the particular officers deputed to attend the sittings of this Assembly, Mr. Forbes, the Chief Electrical Engineer, must be here, should he not?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes, he is here.

Mr. N. S. NANJUNDIAH.—If so, could the Government ask him and let me have the information?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—He too may require notice to answer the question.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—Were the Government satisfied with the inquest report?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—If the Magistrate and the District Magistrate are satisfied, Government also are satisfied.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—The inquest report can only say whether death was due to suicide or murder or accident. Is it not?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—It does not say that the death was due to departmental defects and difficulties?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—In the letters that were subsequently published some allegations against the department were made, is it not?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—It was evident from the letters that suicide was committed on account of certain defects in the department and certain grievances which the officer had. Is it not?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—So it looks from the letters.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—If so, should not the Government have set about at once to enquire into those departmental irregularities and defects?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—It was not considered necessary to do so for reasons already mentioned.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—Is it not the duty of the Government to hold an enquiry when such matters come to notice?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is not a supplementary question. There is no use trying to cross-examine officers on the floor of this House. If the member wants any additional information relevant to the question, Government will furnish it.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—Has it come to the notice of the Government that there is widespread dissatisfaction in the public mind as regards the working of the Electrical Department?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The member is entering into a discussion again. I do not think we can answer that question.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—I beg of the President to realise the seriousness of the problem. The incident has given rise to considerable agitation.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—But the member must observe the ordinary parliamentary practice and ask questions for eliciting information and not enter into a discussion, or compel Government either to express their own opinion or to make them agree with the member's views.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—Has it come to the notice of Government that the public want an enquiry to be held in this affair?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is not a supplementary question.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—I humbly submit that it is. I appeal to the President to see that we are not deprived of the necessary information.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—I disallow that question. Please go on to other questions.

Mr. K. HANUMANTHAIYA.—Then I refuse to go on with other questions.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—In reply to another question, it was stated that the Government did not consider it necessary to take action on the allegations contained in the published letters. What other allegations were necessary to institute an enquiry?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is not a supplementary question. There is no purpose served by your trying to draw the Government into a discussion.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Are the original letters or authenticated copies thereof available here?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Will the Secretary be good enough to read out the copies which he has in hand?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—No.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—On a point of order, Sir. The President

was pleased to give a ruling that the members should ask questions only with a view to elicit further information. But there is provision [in the Rule 11 (f) of the Standing Orders] for members asking for an explanation of the intentions of the Government.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—Explanation not of the intention of Government at one time.

Mr. K. CHENGALARAYA REDDY.—Intentions at one time or at any other time.

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That rule has no relevancy to the questions that are being asked on the present occasion.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Will the letters be made available to me?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I shall get them and give you.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—What happened to the original letters? Were they not taken possession of at the time of the inquest?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Were they not sent on to Government?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. They were brought to the notice of the Magistrate.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Did the Government at least try to get them?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—The member is wasting the time of the House by putting such questions.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—When only copies of the letters were sent to Government and the originals were kept with the Police themselves, did it not occur to the Government to verify whether the copies tallied with the originals?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Government did not consider it necessary to verify them.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Were any charges levelled against the Head of the Electrical Department in the reports of the officer in question?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—What is the name of the Head of the Department?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Mr. S. G. Forbes.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—What are the specific charges made by Mr. Murthy against Mr. Forbes?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No charges; he has merely abused the officer.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—What are the abuses?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I have promised to give the member the letters themselves.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—For the information of the House as a whole, will the Government kindly mention the charges made?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I must get the letters before answering that question.

Mr. T. S. RAJAGOPALA IYENGAR.—Will you kindly get them and read them out on the floor of the House?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—They are not documents in the possession of Government.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Was not one of the letters which have been published, addressed to Sir Harold N. Colam?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Did that letter reach Sir Harold N. Colam?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Government are not aware.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Will the Government make necessary enquiries of the Inquest Officer and furnish the information before the close of the present session?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—It is not a supplementary question.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—On the day of committing suicide, had Mr. Murthy been asked to be present at a meeting or an interview in the Secretariat?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Might have been.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Was Mr. Mehkri, Secretary to Government, Electrical Department, also present at the meeting?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—I might have been present.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—At that meeting, did Mr. Murthy represent to the authorities

that Mr. Forbes was threatening him with dire consequences, that he was therefore afraid of working under Mr. Forbes and should not be posted to work under him?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Did he make such a representation to Government at any time?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—I take the responsibility for the accuracy of the statements I make. My question is, was Mr. Forbes threatening Mr. Murthy with some severe punishment, and did Mr. Murthy therefore represent to Government to post him for some other post and not make him work under Mr. Forbes?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. I have already said so.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—If sufficient evidence to that effect is produced, will the Government institute an enquiry into the matter at least then?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—It is not a supplementary question.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—On the day of committing suicide, was Mr. Murthy ordered to go and begin to serve under Mr. Forbes?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—At least orally did the Government ask Mr. Murthy to work under Mr. Forbes?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. Government were considering the question of abolishing the appointment. But no posting was ordered yet.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Did Mr. Murthy know that he would have to work under Mr. Forbes?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—He might have known.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Was there not some difference of opinion as to whether 50-cycle frequency or 25-cycle frequency should be generated at the new Power Station?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Are not the Government aware that on that point, the two officers differed irreconcilably?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—This post of Electrical Inspector was created with the object of enabling the incumbent thereof to submit reports in respect of accidents, direct to Government, and the officer was instructed to make his reports fearlessly. Now it is proposed to abolish the post. Does it mean that there is no more fear of accidents and no more need for fearless reports?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Reports will be made by some other officer.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Will that officer be subordinate to Mr. Forbes or independent of him?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—He will be subordinate to him, except for purposes of special reports.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—To whom are the reports to be submitted?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—To Government.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—At the meeting held on the day on which Mr. Murthy committed suicide, did any question pertaining to his relations with Mr. Forbes come up for review?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Did Government communicate their displeasure to Mr. Murthy in respect of any of his reports?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. Bhupalam R. CHANDRA-SEKHARAYYA.—Could it be that certain charges were levelled against Mr. Murthy and that he had been asked to attend that meeting in that connection?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—That is not a supplementary question.

Mr. K. NARAYANA SETTY.—If an independent committee of enquiry is constituted, will it not help to sift the truth and make it known to the public?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. C. RAMASWAMY SETTY.—In his letter to Sir Harold N. Colam, Mr. Murthy made a statement to the effect that if Government were to drop him in the midstream, he was sure to be victimised by a certain officer, and another statement was to the effect that Mr. Murthy had been stigmatised as incompetent and therefore he was committing suicide. On the basis of these statements, did not the Government think it necessary to ascertain from Sir Colam what conversations had taken place between him and Mr. Murthy?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. A. MIDDLETON.—Was Rs. 450 Mr. Murthy's own pay or was it given to him in view of the special appointment held by him?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—The grade was due to him and it was given.

Mr. A. MIDDLETON.—Did any officer recommend him for the special appointment he held?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Yes, the Head of the Electrical Department recommended him for it.

Mr. A. MIDDLETON.—Who was that officer?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Mr. S. G. Forbes.

Mrs. H. S. MADHAVA RAO.—Is it a fact that Mr. Murthy made several allegations against Mr. S. G. Forbes in his letters to the Government?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mrs. H. S. MADHAVA RAO.—Is it possible that Mr. Murthy committed suicide because he was unable to substantiate the charges he had levelled against Mr. Forbes, if and when an enquiry was instituted?

Mr. A. V. RAMANATHAN.—No answer.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—When Mr. Murthy was Electrical Inspector, had he a dual responsibility, answerable to Mr. Forbes in one respect and to Government in another?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—This is not a new point. I am extending the time by five minutes and would appeal to members to ask only important questions.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—Did any non-officials represent to Government

that a committee of enquiry should be appointed?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Some Arya Vysya Association held meetings and passed resolutions to that effect.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—What was the reply of Government to those representations?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No reply was given.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—Was it not the duty of Government to send them replies?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That question does not arise.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—At the meeting held on the day Mr. Murthy committed suicide, did Government ask him to work under Mr. S. G. Forbes?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No. At the time of his death he was still an Electrical Inspector. Abolition of the post was only subsequent to his death.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—He had not received any orders before his death to the effect that his post was going to be abolished?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—No.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—Did any one personally tell him that he was likely to be transferred?

Mr. M. G. MEHKRI.—Somebody might have told him.

Mr. K. SUBBIAH SETTY.—Has a tragedy similar to the present taken place in the history of Mysore at any time in the past?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—There might have been cases of the kind in the past also. They may happen at any time if people are neurotic.

Mr. S. C. MALLIAH.—In view of the very large number of questions and answers on this unfortunate affair, will the Government be pleased to take steps to see how far the facts brought to notice to-day are true?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—There is nothing new in them.

Mr. B. S. VENKATANAGAPPA SETTY.—In view of the tragic circumstances of the case in question, will the Government be pleased to extend any special help to the children of the deceased?

Mr. PRESIDENT.—That is not a supplementary question.

4. The Mysore Coffee Market Expansion Bill.

The SECRETARY to GOVERNMENT, DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (Mr. V. Vedavyasacharya) explained the principles of the Bill as follows:—

As a result of the present war, the Europeans markets (with the possible exception of Great Britain), which absorbed about one half of the total quantity of coffee produced in India, became practically closed for the export of Indian coffee. It was feared that the whole crop would be unloaded on the Indian market and the price thereby considerably reduced, a substantial portion remaining unabsorbed. Persons interested in the industry therefore commenced to explore the possibility of controlling the marketing of coffee. Mysore, which accounts for about half the coffee produced in India, was also interested in the solution of this problem.

In September 1940, the Hon'ble the Commerce Member of the Government of India convened a conference at Madras for the purpose of considering the question. The representatives of the Government of Mysore, Madras, Coorg and Travancore also attended. At that conference the following tentative conclusions were reached, namely:—

(1) that all estates exceeding a certain acreage should get registered;

(2) that the owners of registered estates should be allotted a quota for the sale of coffee in the Indian market, depending on the anticipated demand and liable to revision from time to time;

(3) that coffee produced in excess of the quota should be handed over to a common pool, and that such coffee should be exported or, if found more profitable, released for internal sale;

(4) that the moneys realised by sales from the pool should be distributed among those who have contributed to the pool in proportion to their contributions; and